

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIV, Issue No. 126

WEDNESDAY MAY 5, 2004

www.saipantribune.com 50¢

INSIDE



Fire Season

Southern California's 2004 fire season opened Monday with firefighters battling blazes that covered nearly 5,000 acres and forced hundreds of people to evacuate.

Page 13



Distance Education

When Robin Lizama Palacios arrives on the campus of West Virginia University this month, she won't just be picking up that master's degree in early childhood intervention she earned. She'll also be delivering a good-will message of sorts.

Page 20



'Friends' Finale

Even though "Friends" is the most popular sitcom of the past 10 years, it has had little discernible impact on TV. It was a reliably genial sitcom about Ross, Rachel, Chandler, Monica, Phoebe and Joey who were there for each other, no more, no less. But make that definitely no less.

Page 22

\$10M bond pushed in Verizon deal

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Before the proposed purchase of Verizon's local carrier becomes a done deal, Gov. Juan N. Babauta and the CNMI's consumer counsel proposed yesterday that enforcement procedures be set up and that Pacific Telecom Inc. be required to post a \$10-million bond to ensure that the company will not violate the conditions of an approved settlement.

Babauta, through Assistant Attorney General James Livingstone and CNMI consumer counsel Brian Caldwell, submitted to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Commission a joint

proposal that outlined enforcement provisions providing for a minimum penalty of \$10,000 against PTI if it eventually violates the settlement that will seal its purchase of Micronesian Telecommunications Co.

"Any order approving this sale needs to include strong, clear enforcement provisions that should be enforceable by everyone,"



Babauta

approve the telecommunications sale.

not just the parties. Only with such a clause can the [CTC] ensure that the people of the Commonwealth receive the full benefit of the parties' stipulations," Livingstone and Caldwell said.

The proposed enforcement provisions state that the CTC should retain jurisdiction over enforcing an order that would

They seek to allow any individual or organization to file a complaint with the CTC and serve it on PTI to enforce the order.

Under the proposal, anyone who believes that PTI is violating the settlement can provide the company a written notice of violation, which will give the company 30 days to remedy the situation. After 30 days, the complaining entity may then

See \$10M on Page 8

Study being done on retiring \$101M government deficit

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The Babauta administration is now conducting a feasibility study on how the Compact impact funding allocation could be used to retire the government's \$101 million deficit.

Public information officer Peter Callaghan disclosed yesterday that the Blue Ribbon Committee is exploring the possibility of floating a bond to address the government's liabilities. The committee is composed of Gov. Juan N. Babauta, House Speaker Benigno R. Fitia, Senate President Joaquin Adriano, and Retirement Fund board chair Joseph Reyes.

It is anticipated that, in the next two months, the CNMI government's deficit would hit \$101 million.

In a report submitted to the House of Representatives, the Department of Finance had said that, as of February, the government's cumulative deficit has

See STUDY on Page 8

CHC has no radiologist

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Health Center now lacks a radiologist following the recent departure of its lone radiology specialist, Dr. David Southcott.

The DPH administration has denied this but CHC staff members confirmed the absence of Dr. Southcott, when asked.

"We don't have our radiologist here anymore," said a staff who agreed to speak on the condition of anonymity.

DPH spokesman John Douglas, See CHC on Page 8



SHAN SEMAN

HURRAY FOR TEACHERS

Teachers, students, parents, and supporters from Kagman Elementary School wave balloons along Beach Road just south of the Oleai intersection in recognition of Teachers Appreciation Week yesterday afternoon.

Babauta: Mall shutdown 'temporary'

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta urged the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents to explore all possibilities to keep the Pacific Gateway project afloat, following a decision last week to close down the La Fiesta mall.

The governor pressed board officials to work on a solution to the problem and have a little more initiative in looking at how to tap additional help from the administration and the Legislature.

"I don't think the BOR is closing it [Gateway] for good. They did it [shutdown] to look into it thoroughly and to figure out what can be done, figure out something else to keep it going," said Babauta in an interview.

He added that he can understand

the anxiety of the regents and their hesitancy to take on additional responsibility but he reminded the board that the administration and the Legislature are willing to help.

Besides worries over the college's accreditation, Babauta said the board is also anxious over the overall expenses of the college.

"Opportunities and funding are available and it would take a little bit of initiative from their side to look for this funding. Funding would not come to the board room and fall from the sky," Babauta said.

In a separate interview, public information officer Peter Callaghan said the decision to shut down the La Fiesta mall is a cost-saving measure implemented by the board in hopes to save money from its daily maintenance.

"The college anticipates to save an estimated \$30,000 a month from closing the La Fiesta mall. This is a short-term plan," he added.

Callaghan said the administration is waiting for the board's business plan for the mall, including how much it would cost to renovate the building.

He said a Request for Proposal for the project has been announced in preparation for the complete repair of the mall.

The NMC-BOR had voted Friday last week to put on hold its Pacific Gateway project and shut down the operation of the La Fiesta complex in San Roque for lack of funding.

Board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said the mall would remain closed until further studies are made and or adequate funds are identified.

See BABAUTA on Page 8

Local

Governor to Guerrero: So sue me

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta reportedly dared Board of Education member Herman T. Guerrero to file a case against him if he thinks the Public School System is being shortchanged by the government despite the continued funding assistance and increase in its annual allocation.

“If he wants to sue me, let him sue me. If his concern is education, where would he get the money [to pay for the lawsuit]? Why waste money on that if his concern is really education?” the governor asked, as quoted by public information officer Peter Callaghan.

In an interview yesterday, Callaghan said the reason why Guerrero threatened to haul the governor into court remains un-

known, though he speculated that politics may be behind it.

Callaghan refuted Guerrero’s statement that PSS is inadequately funded under the Babauta administration, citing the governor’s recent passage of House Bill 14-62, which set aside \$1.8 million for the construction of HeadStart centers and additional classrooms for the PSS.

The governor signed the bill into law on April 22.

“The money is from the interest income earned by the PSS bond at the Bank of Hawaii Capital Improvement Projects account. The money is there. If they have not received it, they will receive it,” said the PIO.

Callaghan explained that for fiscal year 2004, the PSS budget is pegged at \$37.2 million; it has also received \$22.5 million in federal grants. All in all, the PSS

will get \$60 million from both the local and federal governments.

For fiscal year 2005, the governor’s budget proposal allocated \$42 million for the school system.

Under the CNMI Constitution, the PSS should receive 15 percent of the entire CNMI government’s budget but Callaghan said the PSS got 17 percent in fiscal year 2004. This will go up to 18 percent in fiscal year 2005, he added.

“I don’t understand what this is all about. They requested \$2 million for the Headstart and the governor signed it. I don’t know what motivated him [Guerrero] to make that threat, unless it is politically motivated because he has an axe to grind against the governor.”

Callaghan further stressed that the governor has been doing everything he can to help the

education system and it is Guerrero who has not done anything to lift the PSS’ status when he was still the BOE chair.

The Western Association of

PSS wants its cut of the alien funds

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The Public School System believes it should get a share of the alien workers’ funds, even as it supports the holding of a feasibility study on converting Marianas High School into a technical school.

“I don’t think that the Northern Marianas College should get all that [alien fees],” said Board of Education member Herman T. Guerrero in a meeting last week.

The college is a major recipient of money coming from the fund, pursuant to public laws 5-32, 6-4, 7-21, Executive Order 94-3, and Public Law 10-66. Other recipients are the municipal governments and other government agencies.

The Nonresident Workers Act is a major source of revenue for the government, which collects from employers \$225 for each guest worker they have. The

Schools and Colleges placed PSS on a “high risk” grantee status in September 2003 due to questions over how it accounts for the grants it receives. The PSS also failed to

submit a timely audit under Guerrero’s helm, Callaghan said. He added that the BOE is better off under the present chair, Roman Benavente.

fee is collected each year.

Meantime, the board approved last Wednesday the proposed feasibility study for the Marianas High School, as embodied in House Resolution 14-4 introduced by Rep. Justo Quitugua.

Quitugua, chairman of the House Committee on Education, said the resolution’s goal is to create more skilled local workers—also the primary purpose of the Nonresident Workers Act.

The resolution aims to establish MHS as a technical high school that adheres to the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act and strengthens the quality and economic competitiveness of the local workforce.

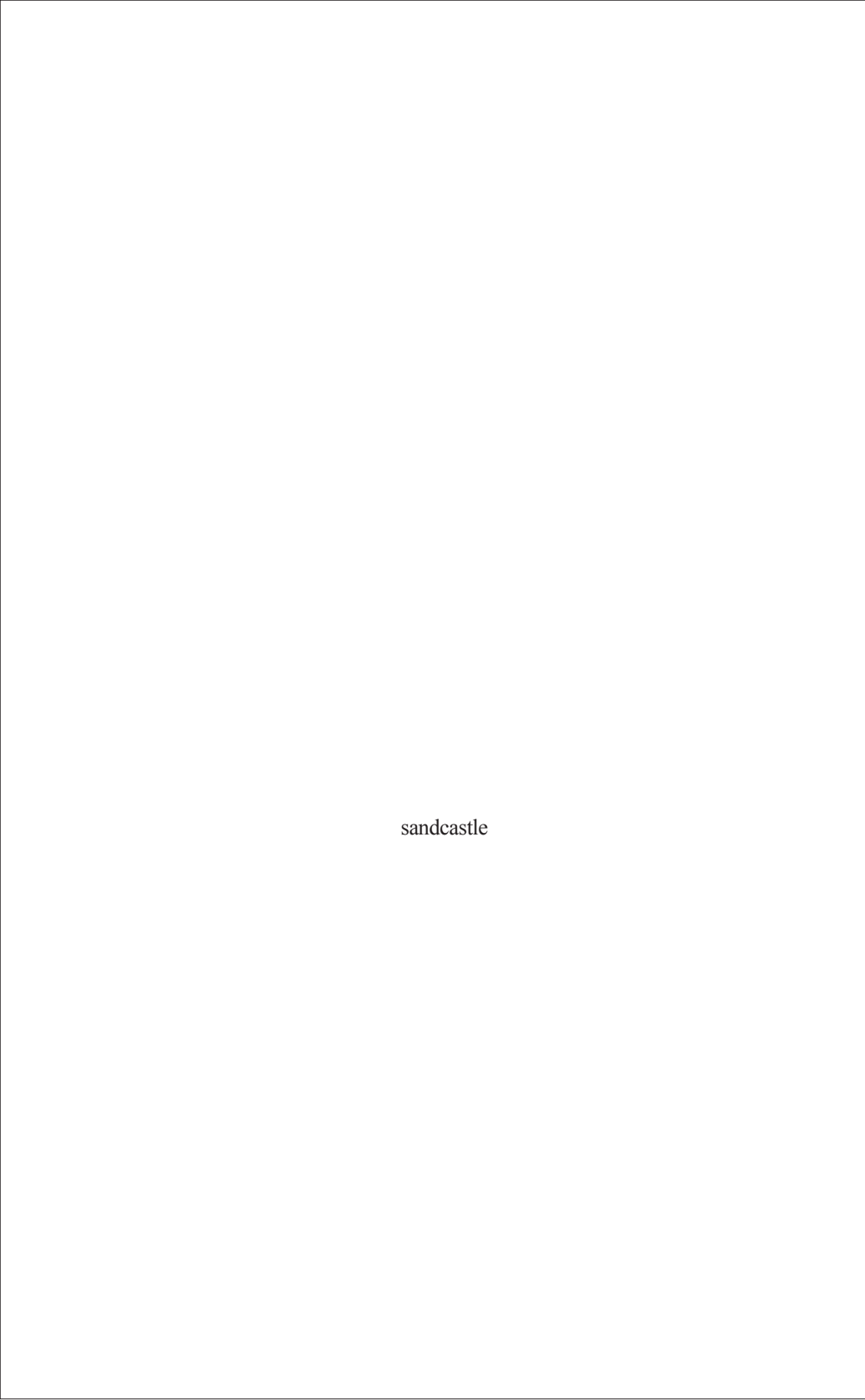
Quitugua said that it has been 20 years since the enactment of the Act, yet the CNMI continues to rely heavily on alien workers.

He said a campus concentrated on technical education/training would provide students with technical literacy to succeed in the workplace and further their education.

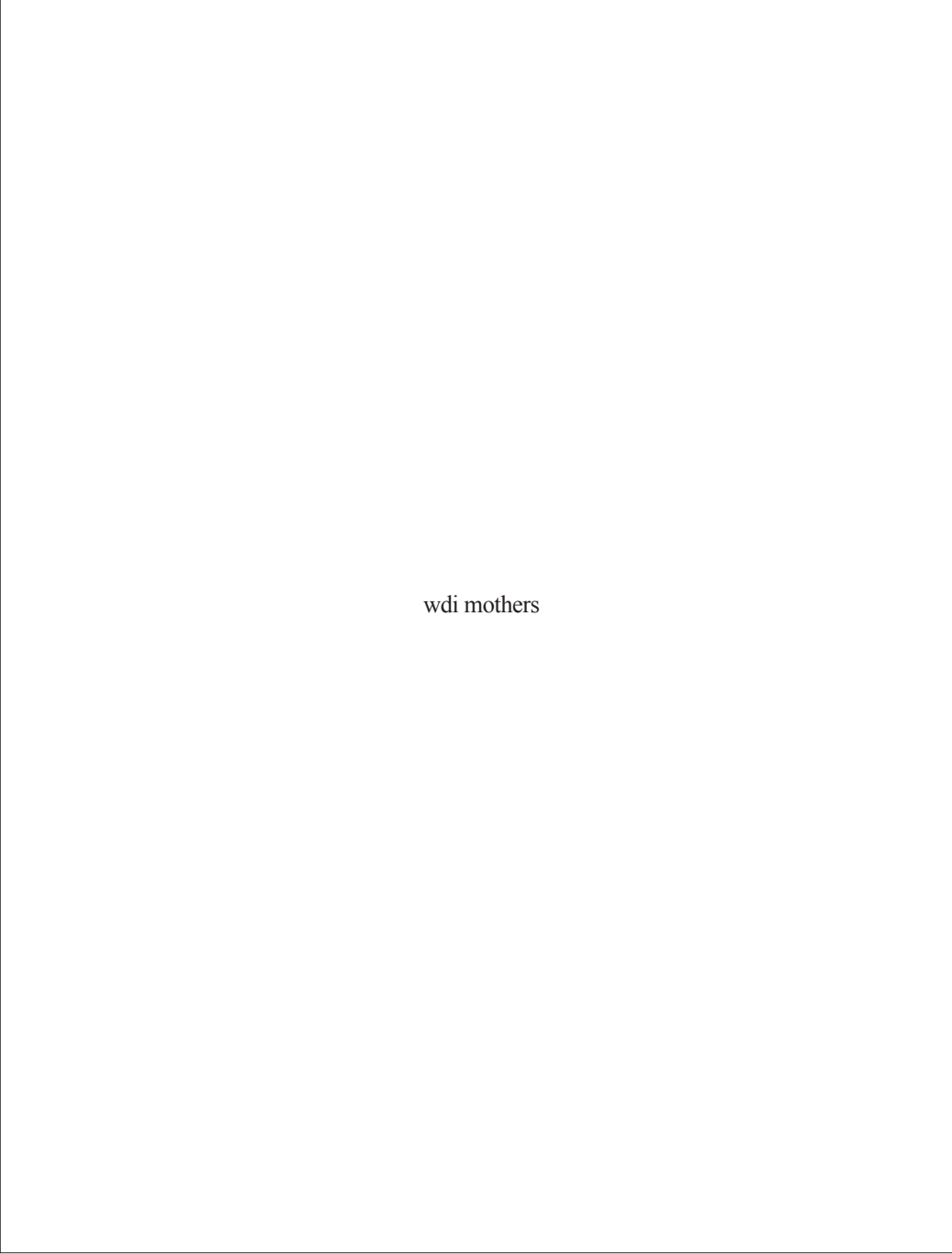
The proposed conversion project would require over \$2 million. The board said the feasibility study itself would cost some \$10,000. It expects the Legislature to fund the study.

PSS said Quitugua’s committee is looking at the possible allocation of \$4 million to \$5 million from the alien fees, to be used to operate the technical school.

Quitugua cited findings by various U.S. organizations such as the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education at the University of Minnesota and the National Center for Education Statistics that reform efforts that emphasize high content and performance standards for all students in both academic and technical subjects, the integration of academic and career-technical education, and contextualized, work-based learning greatly improve learning results.



sandcastle



wdi mothers

May is Mental Health, Substance Abuse Month

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta yesterday declared May as Mental Health and Substance Abuse Month to raise awareness of mental health, mental illness, and substance abuse and the need for appropriate and accessible services for the community.

“The [CNMI] has made a commitment to community-based systems of mental health,” he said. “Changing individual behavior is difficult, therefore our community continues to work and offer treatment for those who need and want it. The recovery rate from mental illnesses is equal to the recovery rate from physical illnesses and we continue to focus our resources to rescue lives and restore hope.”

The month will feature various activities, including outreach programs aimed at educating individuals in the community.

Behavior Health and Addiction Service manager Joseph Kevin Villagomez said that education awareness activities set up in the past have already shown positive results as more people present themselves to the Community Guidance Center for assistance.

“For a long time, the bulk of referrals came from the courts,” he said. “Lately, people are coming in on their own to address their problems, and a lot of that is happening because of all the educational

...and is Farmers Month, too

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta also signed yesterday a proclamation declaring May as farmers’ month, or Mes Lancheros, recognizing all farmers and ranchers in the CNMI for their contribution to the local economy.

“For decades, farming and ranching have engaged in traditional and cultural practices in the CNMI and throughout the world,” he said in a statement. “Through these practices, our farmers and ranchers have produced various fruits, vegetables, and meat to enrich our daily intake. I urge all CNMI residents to celebrate and support efforts to promote these traditional and cultural practices throughout the year. I invite each and every person to participate in purchasing locally grown produce.”

awareness that we’ve been promoting within the community. The word of help being available is already out there and is working, and we’re going to continue to spread the word...that help is available.”

He said the CGC will focus on mental health and substance abuse throughout the month.

“We’re focusing on that, but we actually deal with these issues the whole year through,” he said.

Division of Agriculture acting director Ben Borja said several activities are scheduled for the month in honor of the local farmers and ranchers, including tours of several commercial farm plots and ranchers.

The tours are available for schools,” he said. “All they have to do is contact [DOA]. It is a very educational experience.”

He also said that various farmers will be donating produce to the man’amko and the Commonwealth Health Center Volunteers.

“All proceeds from the produce being sold by the CHC Volunteers will remain with the CHC,” he said. “That’s another contribution from the farmers and ranchers.”

Borja said the signing was the second proclamation recognizing farmers, the first being last year.

He said several individuals who have been helped by the CGC in the past are now employed with the Center.

“Some of the people that had help from us and had a rough time liked what they did, went on to further their education, and came back and are working with us and helping others.”

Villagomez said no one should suffer in silence and urges all who go through crises in their lives to seek assistance.

More charges filed vs shooting suspects

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

The Attorney General’s Office yesterday filed criminal charges against two men who were involved in an attempted robbery at a Sadog Tasi poker establishment, where one of them shot two employees.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton filed before the Superior Court charges against John Castro Pangelinan, 26, and Daniel Muna Quitugua, 25.

Last Monday, federal prosecutor Patrick Smith separately filed before the U.S. District Court a criminal complaint charging Pangelinan and Quitugua with Hobbs Act robbery conspiracy and using and carrying a firearm during a crime.

Hutton charged Pangelinan with two counts each of assault with a dangerous weapon and aggravated assault and

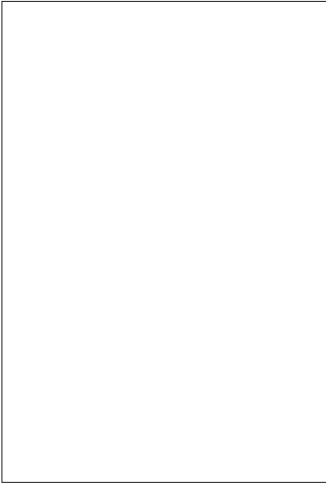
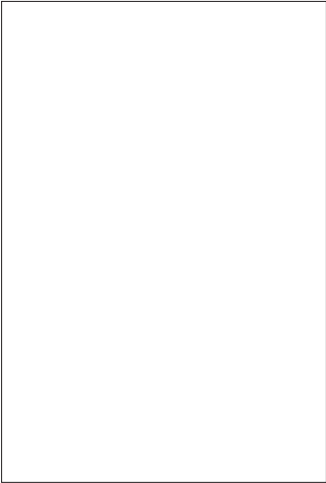
battery, and a count of conspiracy to commit robbery.

He accused Pangelinan of shooting security guard Angelo Miclat Laborce and cashier Yun Ji Jiang of the Capitol Poker last Thursday. Police said Monday that the victims, who were hit in the arm, were in stable condition.

Hutton accused Quitugua of

conspiring in the commission of robbery, assault with a dangerous weapon and aggravated assault and battery.

The suspects failed to get any money from the poker establishment, police said. They were arrested in a joint operation by local lawmen and federal agents.

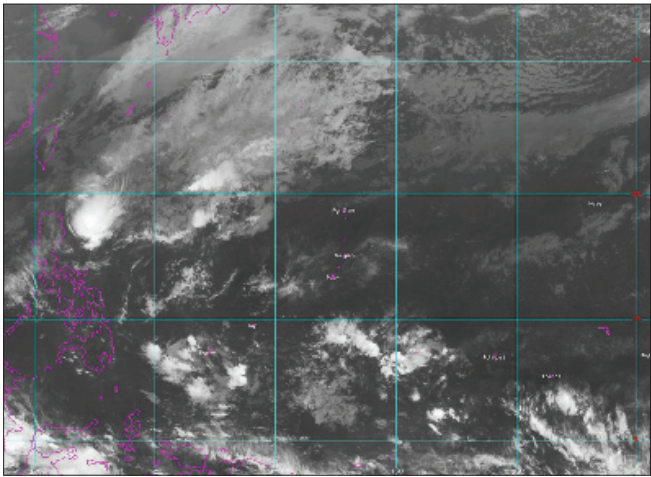


daiichi mothers
+p213

cda sale

COMMUNITY Briefs

WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 AM., MARCH 9, 2004
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Fresh to strong trade winds across much of Micronesia converging into lighter winds near the Equator are producing scattered showers between the Equator and 8n from 130e to 153 and between the Equator and 6n from 160e to 180. A cold front stretches from 25n161e to 20n146e and continues as a shear line to 19n130e. Low- and mid-level clouds...light rain and showers associated this feature extend up to 200 miles north of the boundary. Trade wind convergence south of the cold front/shear line is producing low clouds and showers between 12n and 18n from 132e to 150e. This area includes the Mariana Islands.

SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.

GUAM AND ROTA
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.

PALAU
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.

POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.

YAP AND ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.

KOSRAE
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.

CHUUK
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.

MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
Winds: East at 15-20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Sunny	71F (22C)	60F (16C)
Beijing	Sunny	65F (18C)	48F (9C)
Hong Kong	Sunny	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82F (28C)	68F (20C)
London, England	Sunny	45F (7C)	30F (-1C)
Los Angeles	Sunny	79F (26C)	59F (15C)
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	73F (23C)
Melbourne	Sunny	75F (24C)	59F (15C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	72F (22C)	54F (12C)
New York City	Cloudy	40F (4C)	34F (1C)
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	37F (3C)	25F (-4C)
Paris	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	25F (-4C)
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	53F (12C)	39F (4C)
Rome	Cloudy	49F (9C)	30F (-1C)
Salem, Oregon	Partly Cloudy	60F (16C)	40F (4C)
San Francisco	Sunny	68F (20C)	52F (11C)
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	47F (8C)	35F (2C)
Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	42F (6C)	36F (2C)
Washington, DC	Cloudy	45F (7C)	34F (1C)

Teachers in the spotlight

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Students, teachers, and parents trooped to Beach Road just south of the Oleai intersection yesterday afternoon to wave to passing motorists as part of efforts to raise people’s awareness that this week is special—it has been set aside to honor the nation’s teachers.

According to Kagman Elementary School vice principal Bobbi Merfalen, the week is a time to honor teachers and teacher assistants and recognize the lasting contributions they make in students’ lives.

“We just wanted to show the community that even in times of austerity, we need to work together, take care and appreciate not only those who are teaching now, but also those who were teachers in the past,” she said. “Having all the schools, students, teachers, and everyone come out here just shows camaraderie.”

Merfalen said the roadside waving has been a practice for years and she is hopeful the tradition will continue in the future.

Besides the roadside waving, schools in the CNMI, as well as the rest of the nation, will be holding several activities from May 3 to 7 in recognition of Teacher Appreciation

Week and National Teacher Appreciation Day.

Yesterday’s activity was not only to mark National Teacher Appreciation Day, but Wave for Your School Day as well.

“We’ve been doing this in the past, and this year, we wanted to keep the tradition,” Merfalen said. “Hopefully the tradition carries over into the coming years and maybe we can inspire more people to assist the community by being a teacher.”

Kagman Elementary School teacher Cyndi Deleon Guerrero said the waving displays support for education and the vital role it plays in the community.

“Everyone coming out here to wave shows support for all the good forms of education,” she said. “It [education] is vital everywhere and we’re here to promote it.”

Also on hand for the waving were teacher, students and parents of Tanapag Elementary School.

“We’re here to show that Tanapag Elementary School is very proactive when it comes to anything that has to do with teachers and students,” said TES acting vice principal Escolastica Iguel.

According to a statement released yesterday, the week also features Bring a Sweet Treat Day, which is today. Tomorrow is declared as Bring a

Praise Note Day, with students being encouraged to write a positive note to their teachers, while Friday, May 7, is Bring a Lei or Mwar Day.

“The suggestions do not call for an obligation to go out and purchase an expensive apple, candy or flower. The gifts can be picked from the garden, a handwritten note from the child/parent, or a handmade gift,” it said.

In 1944, Mattye Whyte Woodridge, an Arkansas teacher, began corresponding with political and educational leaders about establishing a national observance to honor teachers.

National Teacher Appreciation Day was first initiated in 1953 after former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt persuaded the 81st United States Congress to proclaim the day in honor of teachers around the nation.

The proclamation, however, referred to that year only. In the late 1970s, the National Education Association and its affiliates began observing Teacher Day on the first Tuesday of March. It continued until 1985 when the NEA and the National Parent-Teacher Association expanded the recognition to a full week and moved it to the first week of May. At the same time, the Tuesday of Teacher Appreciation Week became National Teacher Day.

PIC

LOTTERY
+CYAN

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIV, Issue No. 070

Published daily at 2/F Century Insurance Building,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

John Pangelinan PUBLISHER
Aldwin R. Fajardo EDITOR
Jayvee L. Vallejera ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor.tribune@vzpacifica.net. Website:www.saipantribune.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$182. Off-island subscription rate is \$376 per year. For additional subscription information, call 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact 235-2769. E-mail: sales.tribune@vzpacifica.net

**MILITARY VISITOR**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

USS Cowpens Captain Charles B. Dixon pose with Marianas Visitors Authority deputy managing director Vicky Benavente. Dixon and his crew left Saipan yesterday after a four-day visit.

BABAUTA

From Page 1

In efforts to rescue the La Fiesta project, the governor earlier offered to reimburse the college for operational costs spent on the facility from December 2003 to February this year amounting to some \$150,000.

At the same time, the governor reportedly promised to shoulder NMC's monthly expenses at La Fiesta. King-Hinds said the NMC administration has submitted a \$50,000 billing to the

Governor's Office for March. It has yet to be reimbursed.

The college entered into a \$7.5 million purchase of La Fiesta complex on Aug. 18, 2003 for the Gateway project using a \$3.5 million federal grant from the Governor's Office as deposit.

The Governor's Office had also provided additional \$250,000 federal money for the facility's architectural design. Under the purchase agreement, the college would pay off the remaining \$4 million debt in 20 years at \$200,000 a year beginning October this year.

STUDY

From Page 1

reached \$99.38 million. Of this amount, over \$77 million represents the Retirement Fund's unfunded liabilities.

Fees and expenses associated with the government's medical referral program and professional services paid by the Department of Public Health would cost the government an additional \$1 million by the end of June.

At the same time, the CNMI government's liabilities as of Sept. 30, 2003, totaled \$119.3 million, broken down as: \$8.8 million for PSS-CIP bonds and Judicial Building loan; \$2.1 million in 2003 land compensation/CIP bonds; \$77.3 million in Retirement Fund liabilities; \$12.8 million in unpaid utilities; and \$9.2 million in reserves for future disbursements.

This does not include the \$11.7 million in unfunded liabilities that the government expects to incur in fiscal year 2005, including the \$3.7-million retroactive within-grade increase; \$1.4 million representing amount owed for the 5-percent bonus; \$2.2 million in potential litigation liability; and \$4.3 million owed to the Retirement Fund.

The report also disclosed that the

government needs \$11.5 million for fiscal year 2005 for its PSS-CIP bonds, 2000 CIP bonds, payment for the Judicial Building loan, and the 2003 land compensation/CIP bonds.

The feasibility study now being done on leveraging the government's expected share in the Compact impact funding is seen as a way out from this financial mess.

Callaghan said the \$5.1 million in Compact money that would be allocated to the CNMI in the next 20 years could be used as guarantee when the government applies for the flotation of a bond.

"The Blue Ribbon Committee is seriously looking at that option and a feasibility study is now being conducted. If the Compact money could be used for that, everything would go directly to the repayment of these liabilities," he said.

The Compact legislation provides that \$30 million will be divided each year for the next 20 years among the Marianas, Guam, Hawaii and American Samoa to help those jurisdictions deal with the effects of migration from the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands, which are commonly known as the freely associated states.

**SUPPORTING ADULT LITERACY**

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce recently donated over \$1,500 to the Adult Basic Education Program at Northern Marianas College. Fe Calixterio of NMC accepts the check from Scott Norman, the Chamber's Education committee chairperson, and Jim Arenovski, who is part of the SCC's Education committee.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONDITIONS

From Page 1

file with the CTC a complaint that attaches the written notice.

The CTC shall then retain jurisdiction to award damages and costs incidental to the complaint. The proposal also provides for a minimum penalty of \$10,000 up to \$500,000 per day of violation from the first day after the cure period or from the day the violation started until it is remedied. The penalty will accrue from the first day of the violation if it was intentionally committed.

"Almost all of the stipulations target specific important public interests. Among other things, there are stipulations ending the inter-island toll charges, protecting local workers—both current and future employees, increasing competition within the Commonwealth, guaranteeing certain technological offerings, guaranteeing no rate increases for years, and requiring specific future investments," Livingstone and Caldwell said.

"If any of these provisions are violated, especially after a cure period, it will be significantly detrimental to the Commonwealth. There must be some minimum punishment, which is made

clear now," they added.

The enforcement provisions also seek to require PTI to submit a written annual report on or before Jan. 31 of every year, which will set forth PTI's compliance or non-compliance with the settlement that will become the basis of the sale's approval.

To ensure that PTI has the financial capability to fulfill its obligations, Livingstone and Caldwell said the company must be required to post a performance bond of at least \$10 million.

The lawyers said the CTC is empowered to impose bonds that it deems necessary to protect against risk of failure of telecommunications companies.

They stressed, however, that the proposed enforcement provisions would allow PTI to cure violations before a complaint reaches the CTC.

"Intentional violations, on the other hand, should not be tolerated and should be significantly punished," they said. "It is hoped that this may encourage PTI to be cooperative to avoid future litigation and allow parties to work out differences before filing claims with CTC."

In the nine-page Final Agreed Negotiation Report submitted to the CTC by settlement officer Sean Emory Frink, the government and PTI agreed on

27 issues, including an end to inter-island long distance charges to Tinian and Rota and the retention of all Verizon employees.

Frink said the parties have agreed on the proposed stock purchase of MTC, with the contingency that a final audit of the transaction and several issues that remain to be resolved be decided by the CTC board.

PTI also agreed to join the National Exchange Carrier Association as soon as possible upon closing the agreement. Its membership to NECA will provide assistance to rate and tariff development, industry database management, compliance auditing, economic forecasting, trend analysis, and regulatory policy analysis.

It also agreed to retain all existing employees in their positions and MTC has the option of hiring or transferring new Micronesian employees into such positions in the future.

PTI committed to invest a minimum of \$20 million in capital expenditures during the five-year period immediately following the closing of the deal; that there will be no local rate hike for two years from deal closing; and that a trust fund would be established for the benefit of all MTC employees.

CHC

From Page 1

who was asked about the issue since last week, said Monday, "We're not aware of that [radiologist leaving]."

Douglas, who left for an off-island trip yesterday, said he has asked administrative officials, including Public Health Secretary James U. Hofschneider about the issue.

A CHC patient, Tinian resident and CNMI historian Don Farrell, also affirmed the lack of a radiologist at the government health center.

"I asked them when can I get the result of my CAT scan and I was told 'I don't know' because the radiologist has left. There's no radiologist right now at CHC," said Farrell.

He said such information should be brought out so other people would know. "People want to know the result [of their exams] as soon as possible. So how long can the CHC provide that information without a radiologist here?" asked Farrell.

Meantime, Douglas also denied Monday that physicians are soon leaving CHC. Sources said about eight physicians are not renewing their contracts, which are said to expire in June this year.

"We don't have that kind of information," said Douglas.

The lack of physicians has been a lingering problem at CHC. In Sept. 2003, four emergency doctors reportedly left CHC, leaving only four full-time physicians at the department.

CHC said it could still meet the demand because it employs the part-time services of physicians from private clinics and Naval doctors.

DPH said CHC gets to hire new physicians from off-island but they only sign up for short-term contracts—from a month to three months.

As of February, DPH said that a total of six physicians have been hired this year, with one completing a temporary contract.

They included Drs. Dwayne Coad, Pradeep Bhanot, and Leon Hart. Bha-

not had since left after completing a month-long contract. Coad and Hart were assigned at CHC ER.

In January, CHC welcomed Dr. Elizabeth Hernandez, a pediatrician, and a husband-and-wife team, Dr. Dan Karl and Dr. Rosemarie Maninno, who are both internists. Douglas said that of the five "new hires" in November 2003, four have left the island.

Last November, CHC announced the entry of Drs. Caesar Cajita, Arunas Urbonas, Bernadette Saccomanno, Jennifer Lo, and Stan Bristow.

The urgent hiring of physicians comes amid the current shortage of medical personnel at the community hospital, which has caused delays in the delivery of health care.

To relieve the situation, the department had called on residents to visit CHC satellite clinics in San Roque and San Antonio first.

The department also encouraged residents to see their family physicians or visit their private clinics.

Saipan Tribune Make it your **DAILY** habit.

Scholarship Office reminds applicants of its deadlines

The Scholarship Office is notifying the public of its 2004/05 application deadlines.

The following are important deadlines for the types of financial assistance that can be applied for:

□ June 30: Public Law 7-32 as amended by Public Law 11-77. Applications and all supporting documents must be received by this date.

□ July 1: Fall quarter/semester Teacher Scholarship and EAP applications must be received or postmarked. Supporting documents must be received within 30 calendar days from the first day of instruction. Applicants may obtain an application by visiting the Scholarship Office at Capitol Hill Government Building #1311 or downloading the application through the Internet at www.cnmischolarship.com.

Applications submitted for Fall 2004 is applicable for Spring/Winter 2005.

Supporting documents needed include:

□ Most recent official sealed transcript

□ Acceptance letter into a recognized U.S. accredited institution

□ U.S. passport and/or birth certificate from court

□ SAT scores (for PL7-32/PL11-77)

□ Recommendation letter from high school (for PL7-32/PL11-77)

Note: CNMI 1040 Tax forms may be required should your official transcript fail to prove residency requirement.

□ 2002 & 2003 1040 Tax form (for PL7-32/PL11-77 & EAP)

□ 2001, 2002 & 2003 1040 Tax form (for PL10-58/PL11-34)

□ Register with the CNMI Election Commission at www.votecnmi.gov.mp

□ Other required supporting documents may be requested.

The scholarships available are:

Public Law 7-32 Scholarship as amended by Public Law 1-77: This scholarship is awarded to graduating high school students with the highest scholastic achievement from each island. The selection is made from the top two students from the islands of Tinian and Rota, four from the island of Saipan, and two from off-island if they meet the criteria set by law.

Public Law 10-58 Scholarship as amended by Public Law 11-34, also known as the "Teacher Scholarship," is awarded to juniors and seniors in the field of teaching, including Early Child-

hood Development and Special Education. They must be admitted into the school of education at their institution in addition to meeting policy criteria. This program expires in December 2004.

Educational Assistance Program (EAP): This "grant" is awarded to students enrolled in an accredited institution pursuing a certificate, associate degree or baccalaureate degree who meet set criteria as stated in the policy. In addition, financial assistance may be offered to the following programs; on-island undergraduate part-time assistance, undergraduate merit incentive and graduate and professional assistance. Funding is not contingent upon availability of funds.

For more information and other financial aid assistance available, log-on to www.cnmischolarship.com or you may also call (670) 664-4750/1/3, or facsimile at 6670-4759.

Other scholarship available:

□ Robert C. Byrd Scholarship: Contact Bill Matson at (670) 664-3790;

□ Saipan Chamber of Commerce Scholarship: Call 670-233-7150/52 for more information;

□ Tinian Municipal Scholarship: Provides financial assistance to students from Tinian and Aguihan who are pursuing undergraduate or graduate degree at U.S. accredited institutions in and outside of the Commonwealth.

For detailed information contact James Mendiola, chairman of the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board at (670) 433-3470. You may also email him at tinianscholarship@hotmail.com. To access the Tinian Municipal Scholarship, visit www.tinianonline.com.

□ CNMI Refaluwasch Scholarship: Chartered since 1994. The Carolinian Affairs Inc. is a non-profit organization charged to promote programs that will benefit the Carolinian community in the CNMI. It provides supplemental funds to eligible Carolinian students wishing to pursue postsecondary studies. This includes graduate and professional studies. For detailed information, email admincao@saipan.com, or call (670) 234-6385 and ask for Jocelyn Kaipat or Patricia Nogis.

□ Federal Pell Grant: www.fafsa.ed.gov

Anyone interested enrolling at Notre Dame, Tulane or Lewis & Clark and needing assistance through the admission process can call Timothy McFarrell at (670) 234-5684.

Seatbelt, sobriety checkpoints this Friday

The Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting occupant protection and child restraint and sobriety checkpoints on Friday, May 7.

The occupant protection and child restraint checkpoint will be set up on 16th Highway in Chalan Kiya by the CUC Waterloo. This operation will start around 7am and will end around 8:15am.

The sobriety checkpoint will be on Beach Road Susupe by the Multi-Purpose Center. This operation will start around 8pm and

will end around 9:15pm.

Each checkpoint conducted will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes) at each location. This activity is part of the department's efforts to deter, detect and ensure that all vehicle occupants are protected.

In addition, traffic officers will be conducting highway criminal interdictions, saturation patrols, aggressive driver interdictions, and laser activities.

For more information, contact Sgt. Joseph A. Flores at 664-9084/5/6.

'Other work' blamed for low turnout in teacher rep polls

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

A random survey conducted among teachers in the Public School System showed that more teachers failed to vote in last January's teacher representative election due to prior obligations.

In an April 2004 report, PSS teacher representative Ambrose Bennett said that of 273 teachers, 73 (27 percent) said they had other obligations after school. They also cited the poor time frame for voting.

The election, which resulted in Bennett's victory over Marianas High School's James Yangetmai, was held on Jan. 19, a Monday. Only about 25 percent of PSS' 500 full-time teaching staff participated in that poll.

The outcome prompted Bennett's opponents to question his mandate to represent the entire group.

Bennett said that based on the survey, which he conducted after his appointment to the board, showed that 21 percent or 56 teachers "forgot or didn't know

about the election."

Other respondents said they had no transportation, others thought the election would not make a difference, while others still did not want to be part of the process. Seven percent or 18 teachers cited "various reasons with special circumstances."

Bennett said the questionnaires came from 12 schools.

"Only 12 schools returned their reports but it is a sufficient sample to determine what needs to be done for the next election," he said.

The 273 respondents came

from Kagman High School, Kagman Elementary School, Oleai, GTC, Marianas High School, Hopwood Junior High School, William S. Reyes, Garapan, Dandan, Koblerville, and Saipan Southern High School.

The election was sponsored by the Governor's Office in efforts to finally resolve the dilemma in the selection or appointment of a BOE teacher representative from PSS.

The BOE non-voting seat for PSS teachers has been vacant since middle of 2002.

Bennett's term ends after

marpac

Hunt on for old Japanese statues

Volunteers from the Pacific Society of Japan will be on the island of Saipan on June 11 and 12 to look for the remaining statues of the Bodhisattva Jizoo.

The stones statues were about 20 inches in height and were placed along the old road up on Mt. Tapotchau from Gualo Rai. These 88 stones statues were built in Uwajima on the island of Shikoku and brought to Saipan to be placed at each corner of the road to Mt. Tapochau. This project was completed on March 21, 1935. At the top of the mountain, a statue of the famous historical Buddhist priest, Kooboo Daishi, was placed.

At that time there were about 100-130 Japanese citizens from Uwajima living in Garapan. They collected donations and carried the statues up the old road to be placed at each corner.

These statues were placed to protect travelers and young children. The 88 statues also represented the Japanese 88 temple pilgrimage on Shikoku Island. This hike was usually held on the days of the equinox and was very popular with school children as well as the local community.

At that time, the so-called road could only be traversed by bicycles and walkers. School children would take field trips all day to the top of Mt. Tapochau. From the top they could look down and see the white blossoms of coffee trees while eating their lunch.

Each statue had a number. Today we can only find number 56, 58, 62, 71, 82, and 85. Three of these can still be seen near Mt. Carmel Church. One is located among the monuments at Marpi. Ben Borja and Gregorio Cabrera each have in their possession a Jizoo statue.

The Pacific Society of Japan would like to invite volunteers to help locate more of these statues. If you would like to help or have knowledge of these statues of the Bodhisattva Jizoo, please contact Sachiko Adachi at 235-2459 or e-mail at sachiko@itecnmi.com.

Volunteers will walk down from Mt. Tapochau along the old road and trail to try and locate any remaining statues. Any elders who can help locate statues or help find the old road can contact Adachi.



DONATION FOR YAP

Marian Aldan-Pierce displays a check for \$2,500 that DFS Saipan is donating for the disaster victims in Yap. In the truck are boxes of supplies donated by local DFS employees like Donna Williams, third left, and Bernard Nunies, fourth left, that include clothes, bedding and other items needed by the displaced residents of Yap. Looking on are Cathy Cepeda and Lt. Gov. Diego Benevente who spearheaded the relief efforts for Yap.

DCCA workshops teach financial management, energy-saving tips

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs has begun free financial management and energy conservation workshops for clients of its Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

The workshops, sponsored by LIHEAP and the DCCA Residential Energy Assistance Challenge Program, are aimed at helping low-income clients meet their utility needs through education on household financial management and energy conservation methods in the home.

“This is a great opportunity for families to learn how to take control of their money,” said REACH project coordinator Linda Concepcion-Torres. “We’ll be showing clients how to create a budget for their family, manage their credit, and save. We’ll also be teaching clients how to audit their electric usage at home and show them ways to reduce their energy consumption.”

Weekly workshops are scheduled to be held at 6-8pm in various villages. The next workshop will be held at the DCCA Office on Aging today, May 5. Space is limited and participants must register in advance by calling the DCCA LIHEAP or REACH Offices at 670-664-2568/9.

“Making a two-hour investment in this workshop will make a difference for families who apply what they learn,” said Concepcion-Torres. “Those who are willing to take this class also become eligible to win one of four gas stoves provided as incentives under our federal REACH grant.”

Energy conservation activities for children will also be provided. Advanced registration is also required for children. Interested individuals who are not LIHEAP clients may also participate on a space-available basis.

Business

NMI car sales post 20 percent growth

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Automobile sales in the CNMI have been increasing this year, a development that the Commonwealth Auto Dealers Association sees as a sign of rising consumer confidence in an economy that is on the road to recovery.

Car sales during the first four months of the year reached 479, posting a 20.65-percent growth compared with the same period in 2003, which had sold 397 units.

Year-to-date sales figures showed that Toyota topped the car sales list, enjoying some 54.07-percent of the market pie. The total number of Toyota units that were sold this year reached 259. Toyota enjoyed the same standing as top seller last month, getting a market share of 46.90 percent in April for its 53-unit sales figure.

CADA president Joe Guerrero attributed the growth in the industry to rising confidence that the economy is improving, making people more optimistic

in their ability to repay loans in the coming years.

Guerrero also partly attributed the improved car sales to the ongoing land compensation program by the Marianas Public Lands Authority, which helped improve a select consumer group's buying power. More islanders have been replacing old vehicles since the beginning of the year.

"Each dealers have their good deals. It's a good time to buy cars when consumers enjoy great savings," added Guerrero.

He also noted the addition of 2005 models in the market, including Nissan's Altima. He said Nissan's 2005 Sentra model would soon arrive; Triple J Motors, meanwhile, disclosed the arrival of Mazda's first sports utility vehicle on the island—the Tribute—very soon.

Auto dealers sold 113 cars last month, which translates to a 15.31 percent improvement compared with the 98 cars sold in April 2003.

The next top-selling brand is

Nissan, with local auto dealers selling 56 units from January to April. Nissan's sales captured an 11.69-percent market share.

Mitsubishi and Mazda both got 9.81 percent of the market, with each brand selling 47 units each during the four-month period. Mazda managed to equal Mitsubishi's sales when auto dealers sold 16

car units in April, tailing immediately behind Toyota and Nissan as top sellers of the month.

American automaker Ford sold 20 units this year to capture the fourth slot behind Mazda and Mitsubishi, getting 4.18-percent slice of market sales. Kia had 19 units sold for the period, getting 3.97-percent market share; Hyun-

dai sold 18 to get 3.76 percent of the market.

Microl Corp. topped the auto dealers' list in car sales with 259 units, capturing 54.07 percent of the local market so far this year. Triple J Motors followed with 112 total sales so far, reflecting a market share of 23.38 percent. Joeten Motors sold 108 car units to

follow close behind, getting 22.55 percent of the local market.

Last month, Microl sold 53 Toyota units, making it the top seller for April. Joeten's sales figure reached 33 last month due to Nissan's competitive sales figure of 22. Triple J sold 27 units last month, 16 of which were of the Mazda brand.

Azmar says it has proof of capability to mine Pagan

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Azmar International said it can show proof of its financial capability to undertake large-scale pozzolan mining at Mt. Pagan.

Azmar president Ken Moore said yesterday that he has sent a letter to MPLA board chair Ana Demapan-Castro on the issue.

The letter, according to Azmar local spokesperson Don Farrell, explains that Azmar has already shown evidence of its financial soundness to MPLA representatives during a recent visit to Phoenix.

"But Azmar can always present again to the MPLA and prove that it has the money to handle this project," said Farrell.

He said Azmar local representative Glen Palacios will be ready anytime to meet with MPLA and present "classified information" about Azmar's finances.

"What we want now is a meeting with MPLA," said Farrell.

The MPLA board earlier challenged Azmar to prove that it has the means to finance mining activities at Mt. Pagan.

"Where is the money? Show it to us. We can't decide based on hearsay," said Demapan-Castro during a recent board meeting held on Tinian.

The board had also cast doubt on Moore's character following a negative testimony by Saipan Rep. Joseph Guerrero. Guerrero, a former Historical Preservation Office director, has told the board of a bad encounter with Moore.

He alleged that Moore is a smooth talker. "I want to warn the board to be very cautious. Be very careful with who you

are dealing with here. I urge you to deal with facts and be careful about empty promises," Guerrero told the board.

Guerrero further claimed that Moore violated local and federal regulations when he first came to the CNMI in the 1990s to retrieve a B-29 wreckage in the Northern Islands.

pss menu

daiichi spa
+p287 (blue)

Oil price hits highest level since 1990

By BRAD FOSS
AP BUSINESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—The price of oil rose to its highest level in more than 13 years on Monday as traders responded to the weekend killing of five Westerners working for an oil contractor in Saudi Arabia.

The wholesale price of gasoline also reached a new record, signaling the likelihood of even higher pump prices by Memorial Day, which marks the beginning of the summer driving season.

Crude for June delivery gained 83 cents on the New York Mercantile Exchange,

settling at \$38.21 per barrel—the highest price since Oct. 16, 1990, when oil was valued at \$38.89 per barrel.

The rally in oil prices was largely triggered by the violence in Saudi Arabia on Saturday, when four men opened fire on the offices of oil contractor ABB Lummus Global Inc. Two Americans, two Britons, an Australian and a Saudi died in the attack. All four attackers—who police said were Saudi brothers—were killed.

Analysts cited growing fears among traders that terrorists might escalate attacks against the oil industry in the Middle

East and potentially disrupt supplies.

“This is the second consecutive weekend that key Mideastern oil installations have come under assault,” Tom Kloza, director of Oil Price Information Service, said, referring to an attack a week earlier against Iraqi oil facilities.

On Monday, unleaded gasoline futures increased 2.7 cents to \$1.263 per gallon—the highest settlement on record since the contract started trading in December 1984.

“We’ve gotten ourselves into a big-time speculative market,” said Ed Silliere, an analyst at Energy Merchant LLC.

The run-up in oil prices makes it more expensive to produce gasoline, which already averages \$1.84 per gallon at the pump nationwide, according to the Energy Department.

Analysts say motor fuel supplies are tight because of strong demand, limited domestic refining capacity and government regulations requiring more than a dozen different blends of cleaner-burning gasoline for summer.

In other Nymex trading, the price of heating oil for June delivery rose 2.3 cents to 96.79 cents a gallon, while natural gas futures soared 35.8 cents to \$6.22 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Manufacturing activity slows down in April

NEW YORK (AP)—Escalating materials costs put a damper on manufacturing activity in April, according to an industry survey released Monday. But analysts say the economic outlook is still quite strong, noting that construction spending registered its best month on record in March.

The Institute for Supply Management said its manufacturing index slipped to 62.4 in April from 62.5 in March. The new reading was below the expectations of analysts, who had forecast a reading of 62.7.

The ISM said the economy is growing, but companies responding to its survey said that higher prices of certain commodities, such as aluminum and steel, were causing some difficulties. The ISM’s prices index came in at 88 percent, 2 percentage points higher than in March. It was the 26th consecutive month the index has increased - and the highest the index has been since April 1979, when it was 89.2 percent.

Still, analysts weren’t too worried, saying the risk of inflation remains slight. They focused more on the manufacturing index, which is still well above 50. Any index reading above 50 indicates expansion, while one below 50 indicates that manufacturing activity is contracting.

“The (manufacturing) in-

dex is still at a very high level, and this was an insignificant change,” said Alexander Paris, economist and market analyst for Chicago-based Barrington Research who is hopeful materials costs have peaked for now.

“Anything over 60 indicates an extremely high level of activity, and this shows you manufacturing is still growing at a fairly fast rate,” he said, noting this is the sixth consecutive month the manufacturing index has come in above 60.

That optimism was bolstered by a separate Commerce Department report Monday that found construction activity jumped by 1.5 percent in March from February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$944.1 billion, the highest level on record.

The performance was three times bigger than the 0.5 percent increase that some economists were calling for and the gains were fairly broad. The report also provided further evidence that the construction and housing market in the United States are in good shape. The value of residential projects being worked on by private builders clocked in at an annual rate of \$507.2 billion in March, also an all-time monthly high.

The 1.5 percent increase for March came after a modest 0.4 percent rise in February, according to revised figures.

Labor chief Chao touts new rules on overtimes

WASHINGTON (AP)—Labor Secretary Elaine Chao worked in public and private Monday to head off an embarrassing defeat in the Senate at the hands of Democrats challenging new Bush administration overtime regulations.

Speaking to nursing students in Florida, Chao said the regulation “makes clear that registered nurses who currently receive overtime will continue to receive overtime when the new rule takes effect.”

Her claim drew a prompt rebuttal from the leaders of several nurses’ unions. “For the first time in the history of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), hourly paid employees, including registered nurses, may be denied overtime compensation,” the Coalition to Preserve Overtime Rights for Registered Nurses wrote members of the Senate.

With a close vote expected Tuesday, Chao arranged a private meeting with Sen. Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, who

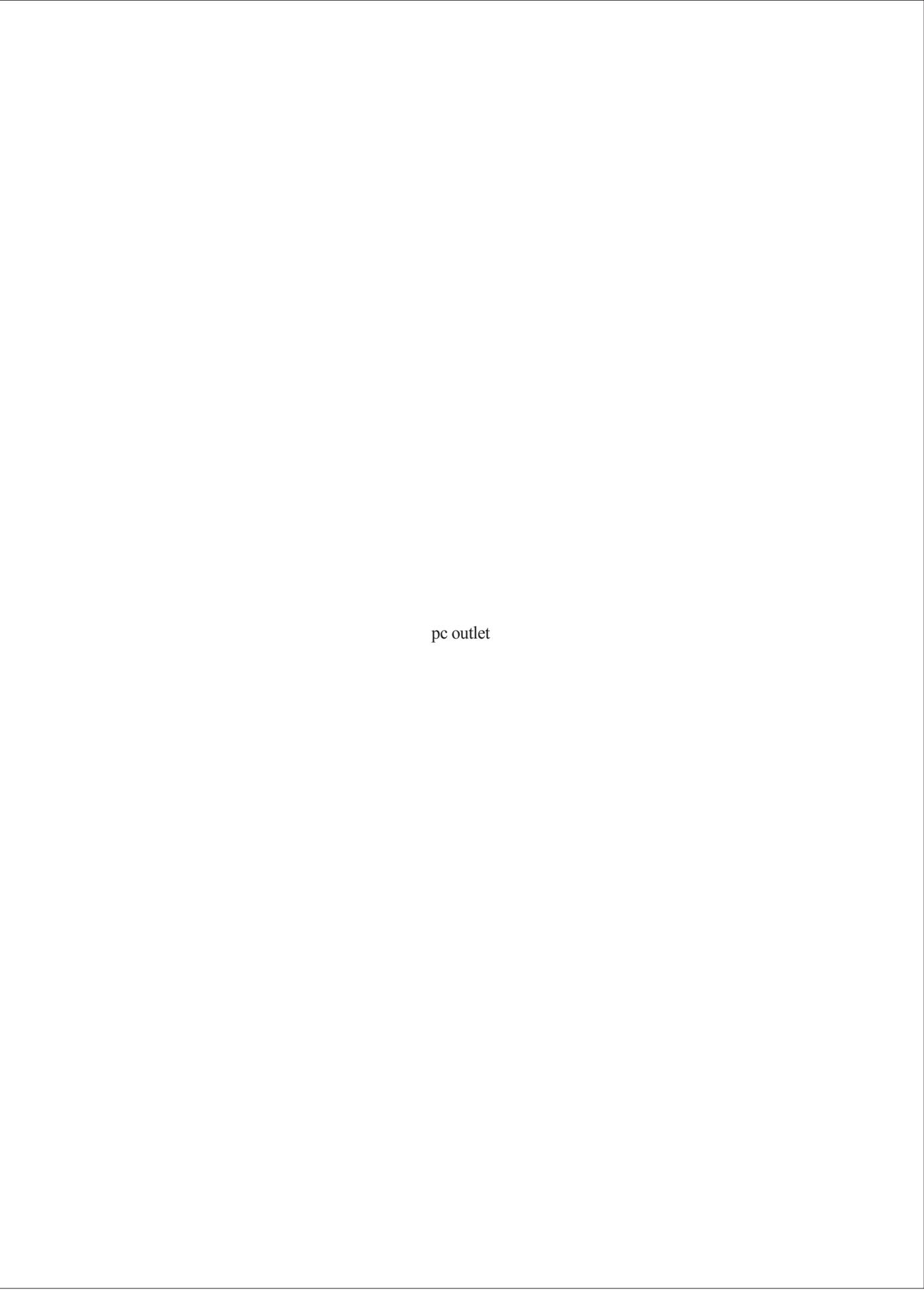
has yet to take a position on the regulations. Chafee was one of six Republicans who sided with Democrats last fall in a 54-46 vote to scuttle an earlier draft.

The rules have been revised extensively since then, in part to meet the election-year concerns of Republicans who feared the impact among voters, particularly in a time of economic uncertainty.

The AFL-CIO strongly opposes the regulation, arguing the change could cost millions of workers their overtime, and congressional Democrats have vowed to try and blunt its impact.

A proposal by Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, would block implementation of any portion of the regulation that strips workers of their current overtime eligibility.

The revised regulation includes declarations that police, firefighters and other “first responders” earning up to \$100,000 a year will be eligible for overtime.



pc outlet

Nation

California fires cover nearly 5,000 acres

By BEN FOX
AP WRITER

TEMECULA, Calif. (AP)—Southern California’s 2004 fire season opened Monday with firefighters battling blazes that

covered nearly 5,000 acres and forced hundreds of people to evacuate. The largest was a 2,500-acre fire in Riverside County. But five other blazes were scattered across Santa Barbara, Los An-

Senator: Intel panel report unflattering

MANHATTAN,Kan.(AP)—The Senate Intelligence Committee’s upcoming report on prewar assessments of Iraq “does not paint a flattering picture” of the nation’s intelligence community, Republican Sen. Pat Roberts said Monday. But Roberts, the committee’s chairman, said the intelligence failure wasn’t limited to the United States. Many nations - including France and Germany, which criticized the U.S. decision to act in Iraq without United Nations approval - believed Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. “Almost everyone believed, regardless of how you felt about whether you should have unilateral military action or wait for the U.N., there was no disagreement about the belief that weapons of mass destruction existed,” Roberts, R-Kan., said during a lecture at Kansas State University. He added later, “The problem is, the information was wrong.” Roberts said the congressional report should be released

in June, and it contains firm conclusions about the need for intelligence reform. “We do not have all of the answers yet about what went wrong before 9-11 and in the prewar Iraq work, but I believe we know enough to begin the process of seriously discussing intelligence reform,” Roberts said. Roberts said even if Iraq did not have a well-developed weapons program, the country’s instability and corruption would have made it a hub for chemical weapons dealing if the United States and others had not intervened. “The United States must be willing to use force, unilaterally if necessary, to protect our security and that of our allies,” Roberts said. “But, it is also time for some hardheaded assessment of American interests.” Roberts also cautioned against what he said were growing feelings that America is entitled and obligated to be the promoter of democracy around the world.



Firefighters with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection set backfires to rob a wildfire of fuel along highway 79, Monday, May 3, 2004, east of Temecula, Calif.

geles and San Diego counties, as temperatures climbed to 100 degrees in some places. Several firefighters among the thousands on the job were treated for injuries, including heat stroke, dehydration and smoke inhalation. Authorities ordered a mandatory evacuation of several homes in the path of the Riverside County fire in the hills south of Temecula. They previously advised residents of about 100 homes to evacuate. The blaze destroyed a home and a research facility used by researchers at the University of California, Riverside. “They are just totally burned to the ground. All that’s left is a

couple of pieces of steel,” said Rick Cook, emergency services coordinator for Riverside County. Another Riverside County fire that broke out Monday afternoon in El Cerrito spread across 400 acres in less than three hours, said Department of Forestry spokeswoman Becky Luther. She said it threatened up to 30 homes. A fire in the Los Padres National Forest, in Santa Barbara County, grew to about 100 acres within two hours. Firefighters had about 75 percent containment on a 50-acre blaze that broke near a Los Angeles County jail in Castaic, said fire Capt. Mark Savage. Firefighters said they managed to slow a blaze that burned 1,500 acres near the Camp Pendleton Marine base in San Diego County. It was about 45 percent contained, with no structures damaged. A fire that started Sunday just east of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County had scorched 350 acres. One structure was burned. The start of the fire season was declared three weeks earlier than last year because of dry weather and a tree-killing bark beetle infestation.

Ohio priest indicted on murder charge

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP)—A Roman Catholic priest has been indicted on an aggravated murder charge in the slaying of a nun 24 years ago. A grand jury had met Friday to consider the charge against the Rev. Gerald Robinson, but its decision was not announced until Monday. Robinson was arrested April 23 in the strangling and stabbing of Sister Margaret Ann Pahl, 71, during Easter weekend in 1980. He was long a suspect in her death. The nun’s body was discovered in a chapel at Mercy Hospital, covered by an altar cloth. Investigators have described it as “ritualistic” slaying that has the Toledo Diocese looking into claims of satanic sex abuse by priests. Robinson was released from jail Monday after supporters put together enough property to post a \$400,000 property bond to cover his \$200,000 bail. He said nothing before getting into a sport utility vehicle that was waiting for him.

Robinson’s attorney, Alan Konop, said his client will plead innocent. He cannot face the death penalty because it was not in effect at the time of the killing. Detectives have said the nun’s death involved some type of ceremony and that they believe Robinson acted alone. Robinson was arrested after investigators analyzed blood patterns and concluded that the murder weapon was in his “control.” They have not identified the weapon or who owned it. Investigators began to review the slaying after a woman contacted them alleging she was physically and sexually abused as a child by several priests, including Robinson, police said. Three other people came forward after Robinson’s arrest claiming they were abused by priests in rituals years ago. Authorities reopened the murder case in December based on information in a letter sent to prosecutors, but they would not say who sent the letter or what it contained.

ctai dhakka

Officials say wait to get Medicare card

By TARA BURGHART
AP WRITER

YORKVILLE, Ill. (AP)—Norma Yeates, looking for a way to shave her husband’s \$385-a-month prescription drug bill, learned she has a lot of homework ahead before signing up for one of the new Medicare discount cards. As the Bush administration heralded the opening of enrollment for the cards on Monday, it added a cautionary note to Yeates and others: Don’t sign up just yet.

Yeates, 70, walked away with a thick stack of brochures describing her choices after she and 200 other elderly patients met at a forum here with House Speaker Dennis Hastert and Medicare chief Mark McClellan. Her next move is to draw up a detailed chart to help figure out which one of 47 discount cards will save the Naperville, Ill., couple the most money.

“I think most seniors will at first say, ‘Oh, I can’t do this.’ But when they sit down, they can do it,” Yeates said. “We’ve been grocery shoppers all our lives, we’ve bought car insurance. This is just a new wrinkle.”

The cards, which cannot be used until June 1, are designed to deliver savings on seniors’ monthly drug bills by encouraging competition among pharmacies, insurance companies and drug companies. Some critics

have questioned whether savings will be significant.

The forum at the Kendall County Senior Center was sponsored by Rep. Hastert, R-Ill. Hastert, McClellan, Senate Majority Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and other Republican lawmakers and administration officials fanned out across the country Monday to promote the new cards, the first widely available benefit from the Medicare prescription drug law enacted last year.

At an event in Washington, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson called the cards “a giant step forward on the road to savings,” especially for low-income older and disabled Americans who qualify for a \$600 subsidy.

Thompson predicted that card sponsors and pharmaceutical companies will be watching Medicare’s new prescription price comparison Web site and will lower prices to attract Medicare recipients. “They are going to be very, very cognizant of what other people are charging,” he said.

Enrollment forms are available from card sponsors, Medicare and some pharmacies.

Acknowledging there will be “a few bumps in the road,” Thompson encouraged people to compare prices for a couple of weeks before signing up for one of 40 national and 33 regional cards. Once enrolled, people cannot change cards

until the end of the year.

He dismissed a call from Democrats for a 30-day grace period in which card holders could change their minds because of the program’s complexity and possible addition of more card sponsors in coming weeks.

“They have already put the wrong information up on the Web site,” said House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California. “I told you it was complex, that it would take a long time. They haven’t even gotten it right themselves.”

Hastert and McClellan answered some basic questions about the program: It is voluntary and the enrollment fee ranges from free to \$30. The most appropriate card for a person depends on what drugs the person takes, where the person lives and whether he or she is open to getting drugs through the mail.

“People say that seniors will never be able to understand this,” Hastert said. “I tell you what, you’re the best shoppers in the world, with the time and ability to take a look. You know what your needs are, you know what’s available out there.”

The atmosphere of the question-and-answer session turned frosty when Carol Applebaugh, 67, stood up in the audience and said she could find no cost savings on several popular drugs in her research through Medicare’s Web site.

hamilton



shell



World

Iraq militiamen clash with US troops

Pentagon probes abuse of Iraqi prisoners

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon said it was pursuing five separate investigations Monday into allegations of abuse of Iraqi prisoners. One, launched in mid-April, delves into interrogation methods of U.S. military intelligence officers in Iraq.

President Bush urged Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to ensure that American soldiers found guilty of “shameful and appalling acts” be punished. A Pentagon spokesman said, “It’s going to take some time to sort through exactly what the facts were.”

A top aide to Bush, speak-

ing on condition of anonymity, said the president wants a report on his desk quickly about the extent of prisoner abuse found by the Pentagon.

Members of Congress also pushed for swift action. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. John Warner, R-Va., summoned Pentagon officials to face his panel Tuesday.

“These allegations of mistreatment, if proven, represent an appalling and totally unacceptable breach of military conduct that could undermine much of the courageous work and sacrifice by our forces in the war on terror,” Warner said.

US troops reprimanded

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—The U.S. military has reprimanded seven soldiers in the alleged abuse of inmates at Baghdad’s notorious Abu Ghraib prison, the first known punishments in the case, an official said Monday. Two of the soldiers were relieved of their duties.

The American officer who oversaw the prison said many more troops might have been involved.

The soldiers were reprimanded on the orders of Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq. Six of them—officers and noncommissioned officers—received the most severe administrative reprimand in the U.S. military, a military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. A seventh

soldier received a more lenient admonishment.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Larry Di Rita spoke of six soldiers who were reprimanded, including two who were “released for cause,” meaning they were relieved of their duties and re-assigned “with prejudice.” He also said the six who received letters of reprimand were from a military police unit. He did not mention the seventh soldier’s case.

“There may well be additional decisions” about disciplinary action against others as a result of the investigation,” Di Rita added.

Another six U.S. service-members—all military police—also may face criminal charges.

By DENIS D. GRAY and SCHEHEREZADE FARAMARZI
AP WRITERS

NAJAF, Iraq (AP)—U.S. forces in Najaf came under their most intense attack yet by Shiite militiamen in a clash Monday that may have killed up to 20 Iraqis. Meanwhile, Thomas Hamill—the Mississippi truck driver who escaped Iraqi kidnappers after three weeks in captivity—flew to Germany for a reunion with his wife.

On Sunday, Hamill fled a house where he was being held

north of Baghdad and ran to a passing U.S. patrol—his first appearance since his captors released a videotape April 10, a day after his abduction, threatening to kill him.

Back in Najaf, the military still held back from going after the militia’s leader, a radical cleric, to avoid angering Iraq’s Shiite majority. Instead, the U.S. turned to a new commander for an Iraqi force taking control of Fallujah, considering Maj. Gen. Mohammed Latif—who opposed Saddam Hussein—to replace another general.

In Baghdad, insurgents opened fire on U.S. soldiers guarding a weapons cache, killing one soldier and wounding two, the military said. Elsewhere, a Marine was killed in by enemy fire in Anbar province, the western Iraqi province where the turbulent cities of Ramadi and Fallujah are located.

The deaths brought the U.S. toll to 153 since April 1—including 15 in May. At least 755 U.S. troops have died in Iraq since the war began in March 2003.

U.S. troops battling insurgents in west Baghdad pounded

rebel positions with artillery fire Monday night, a series of eight or more heavy blasts that resounded through central Baghdad, the Army said.

U.S. troops in Najaf, south of the capital, clashed for hours with Shiite militiamen who barraged the Americans’ base with mortars overnight, then opened fire in the afternoon from several directions. Tank and machine-gun fire demolished a building that troops said was the source of shooting, raising a pillar of smoke. Apache attack helicopters circled but did not fire.

Mexico, Peru recall their ambassadors from Cuba

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico’s ambassador to Cuba returned home Monday, recalled after Fidel Castro condemned the government for supporting a U.N. resolution criticizing Cuba’s human rights record. Peru recalled its ambassador from Cuba for the same reason.

The actions, announced late Sunday, stopped short of severing diplomatic relations but reduced them to the level of charges d’affaires. The Mexican government, accusing the communist island of meddling in its internal affairs, also expelled the Cuban ambassador.

An announcer on Cuban state television read a Foreign Ministry statement saying the Mexican declaration was “inspired by arrogance, haughti-

ness, obstinacy and lies.”

The announcer said Mexican officials informed Cuban Ambassador Jorge Bolanos of his required departure by telephone “only five minutes before the declarations were made public.”

“Another error by the Mexican government,” the announcer said. He did not mention the Peruvian action.

Mexico’s ambassador to Cuba, Roberta Lajous, arrived home Monday, the Foreign Relations Department said, while Olga Beatriz Garcia was appointed charge d’affaires in Havana.

Castro has bitterly denounced last month’s U.N. Human Rights Commission vote, accusing the United States of forcing other nations to support the resolution.

mazda
cmyk
4/30

2 killed, 17 hurt in Gaza missile strike

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—An Israeli attack helicopter fired a missile early Tuesday at a group of armed Palestinians in the Khan Younis refugee camp, killing two and wounding at least 17, residents and doctors said.

The Israeli military refused to comment.

The violence came after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon pledged to come up with a new plan to replace “unilateral disengagement” from Gaza, voted down by his own party.

Witnesses said the gunmen fired two missiles at Israeli tanks in the camp before the helicopter struck.

The attack came during an Israeli military operation in two

parts of the camp. Tanks and bulldozers tore down four buildings across from a Jewish settlement, witnesses said.

The Israeli operation came a day after Palestinian gunmen opened fire on an Israeli vehicle on a nearby road, killing a pregnant settler and her four young daughters.

Doctors at Khan Younis hospital said five of the wounded were in critical condition. Some civilians were among the wounded, they said.

Also early Tuesday, Israeli troops took up positions around Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat’s office building in the West Bank city of Ramallah, witnesses said.

They said Israeli military

vehicles surrounded the complex and soldiers took over buildings across from the compound. There were no reports of gunfire.

Israeli military officials said soldiers were arresting suspects, but the operation was not linked to Arafat’s office.

Though Sharon’s Likud Party soundly defeated his plan to pull out of Gaza in a referendum, Sharon was adamant Monday. “I want to say in the clearest fashion there will be another plan,” Sharon told a meeting of Likud lawmakers, according to a participant.

Israeli officials suggested the plan—which had won U.S. backing and was popular with Israelis—would be slightly

scaled down, and the new version would not be put to a Likud vote.

Sharon had proposed his “disengagement plan” as the best way to obtain security for Israel in the absence of peace moves and to defuse international pressure for greater concessions.

Residents of the Gaza settlement of Neve Dekalim, who had energetically campaigned against the plan, symbolically declared victory Monday by laying the cornerstone for a new neighborhood. “It says we’re here to stay,” said Esther Lilienthal, 67.

Sharon said he would present his new plan to parliament and to the Cabinet, but not to another party referendum.

Americans urged to leave Saudi Arabia

YANBU, Saudi Arabia (AP)—The U.S. ambassador traveled to this Saudi oil-industry city Monday with a simple message for the gathered Americans: Go home. We cannot protect you.

Huddled in a meeting room in a Holiday Inn still pocked with bullet holes after the latest in a string of attacks on Westerners killed two Americans and four others, many said they would heed his words.

The first to go were among the 90 foreign employees of ABB Lummus Global Inc., a Houston-based oil contractor whose offices were attacked Saturday by four gunmen trying to encourage Saudis to join the resistance against the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

The first ABB employees—all Europeans—boarded a van for the Yanbu airport Monday night.

“Money is money, but it’s not worth your life,” said Armando Rosiglion, 63, of Venice, Italy, who arrived in Yanbu 10 days ago on a three-month contract. “I don’t want to take a stupid risk.”

He said a charter flight would take the employees to the Red Sea port of Jeddah, 220 miles to the south, where they were to take commercial flights to their destinations on Tuesday.

A Western diplomat and an ABB official said all foreign ABB employees and their families would depart on chartered flights by Tuesday.

Journalists were barred from the meeting between Ambassador James C. Oberwetter and Yanbu’s American community. But Oberwetter later told a news conference that he had encouraged the families to leave the country.



Mexico probes site of deadly plane crash

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP)—Investigators examined the site Monday where a small plane carrying federal anti-narcotics agents crashed, killing all seven people on board.

The Turbo Commander 840 went down two hours after taking off at around noon Sunday from this border city for Mexico City, said Hector Garcia, head of the federal Justice Department in northern Chihuahua state. There was no immediate indication of the cause.

The victims—five federal agents and two pilots—were all part of a team carrying out drug trafficking surveillance flights in the Chihuahua mountains.

Garcia said the agents were returning to the capital after a two-week assignment, while the pilots were permanently based in Ciudad Juarez, a city of 1.3 million across the border from El Paso, Texas.

Aznar: Spain failed to see terror threat

MADRID, Spain (AP)—Former Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar has admitted for the first time that his government failed to estimate the threat posed by Islamic extremists ahead of the March 11 terrorist attack.

In a book published Monday, Aznar conceded that—because of its success fighting Basque separatist groups—his government may have lowered its guard ahead of the Madrid bombings of commuter trains that killed 191 people and wounded more than 2,000.

The bombings, Spain’s worst terror attack, were blamed on al-Qaida-linked militants.

Aznar’s conservative government initially blamed the strikes on the Basque ETA group. As reports emerged that Islamic terrorists were likely responsible, the Spanish opposition accused the government of a cover up.

His Popular Party, which strongly backed the war in Iraq despite public opposition, lost general elections to the Socialists three days after the bombings.

Schwarzenegger sees US troops in Germany

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany (AP)—California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger met with wounded U.S. troops and escaped hostage Thomas Hamill on Monday after talks with Jordan’s King Abdullah II.

Schwarzenegger told reporters he “talked about the situation in the Middle East” during a private visit with Abdullah at Jordan’s royal palace. The celebrity governor arranged the stop after criticism from some Arab-Americans that his trip to Israel didn’t include meetings with Palestinian groups.

Schwarzenegger said Monday he supports the creation of a Palestinian state and that Palestinians “were not forgotten” on his trip.

TRIBUNE MOTHERS
DAY AD

Campus Life

Saipan lass puts the distance in distance learning program

MORGANTOWN, W.Va.—Sometimes you make a major statement just by showing up.

When Robin Lizama Palacios arrives on the campus of West Virginia University this month for the school's 135th Commencement exercises, she won't just be picking up that master's degree in early childhood intervention she earned with a 4.0 grade-point-average.

She'll also be delivering a goodwill message of sorts ... while making a pretty compelling comment on the new state of the world, and just how that world rotates in relation to WVU.

By simply being a presence at Commencement, Robin will show that the world is (obviously) a smaller place. She'll show that the Internet is making learning more immediate, and more accessible, no matter where you may be on the globe.

And she'll show that as the world is shrinking, WVU's reputation as a top school for distance-learning is growing, growing, growing.

And growing some more.

Robin is a 28-year-old special education teacher on the tiny island of Saipan, around 100 miles from Guam in the western Pacific Ocean. She needed a graduate degree to upgrade her teachers' certification, and because she was so busy, the idea of earning a degree online was sounding better and better. She soon learned just where to turn in cyberspace, courtesy of two colleagues who told her about WVU.

"They had also gotten distance degrees from there," Robin said recently by telephone from her island home. "They told me about it. I knew of West Virginia, because my grandfather is from Pennsylvania, but I didn't know anything about WVU. It really

worked out well."

To work out the May 16 Commencement visit, Robin and family making the trip will jet to Japan and stay overnight. Then they'll board another plane and fly nonstop to Detroit, then Pittsburgh.

After that, it's a motor car cruise down Interstate 79 to Morgantown, where she'll don her cap and gown for the ceremonies at the College of Human Resources and Education to complete her academic and geographic journey.

"Two days to get here and two days to get back," she said. "By airplane. That's a little bit of a trip, huh?"

The hiss in the phone line of that long, long distance call couldn't hide the satisfaction, or the island lilt in her voice, as she talked about just how good it will feel to actually graduate. It took her three years to do it, via her computer, which was tapped into real-time, streaming Web transmissions from WVU's Allen Hall.

Hitting the books was easy, she said, laughing. It was taking care of everything else that got tricky.

Robin has a demanding job, and an even more demanding home life. She began her career in Saipan's public school system as a teacher's aide, and like many teachers on the island, she worked, worked and worked her way up to her present job.

She and her husband, Gus, are the parents of two boys, Tyler, 6, and Damian, 3.

Dependable technology on the part of WVU knocked down one hurdle. She was able to take the transmissions from campus for granted, as Web snags were at a minimum.

But all bets were off, as far as her boys were concerned.

"That was the challenge," she said,



Robin Lizama Palacios

"meeting class requirements while being a wife and mother at the same time. Cooking dinner, cleaning the house, having children, raising them ... I think it was difficult because my sons were always calling for me during the sessions. I had to 'watch' my classes from home with everything else going on."

One thing going on was surprisingly easy to adjust to, she said. The time difference.

When it was 8 a.m. and classes were meeting at Allen Hall, it was 11 p.m. in Saipan. Gus and the boys were sleeping, but Robin was just getting to work.

"I caught on to the time change pretty quickly," she said, "because I had to. The house was quiet, so it was easier to work then anyway."

At home on the island

Saipan is a pretty easy place to live and work, she said.

The island is ringed by coral, and at just 15 miles long, it's roughly the size of northern California's San Francisco peninsula. Saipan is a true, tropical melting pot that's populated mainly by Pacific Islanders and Asians. Around 1,000 Caucasians also live on the island.

Saipan enjoys U.S. Commonwealth status and is part of the chain of Northern Mariana Islands jutting up from the calm waters of the western Pacific in the area known as Micronesia.

It's a popular vacation spot for Japanese tourists, because there's plenty of room to spread out (Saipan only has around 69,000 people) and enjoy the dramatic tropical scenery of open beaches and rocky cliffs that are a welcome respite from the urban crush of Tokyo and Japan's other sprawling cities.

The island is also steeped in history. It's said that famed American aviator Amelia Earhart was executed there by

Japanese military around 1938, after walking away from the crumpled steel of her wrecked plane—and right into the middle of a circle of soldiers.

Saipan was the site of fierce fighting in World War II, and its Chamber of Commerce boasts brochures featuring glossy photographs of Japanese bunkers and other war artifacts that still survive...including one rusted American tank in a lagoon.

According to local lore, Japanese soldiers as late as 1952 were emerging with their hands held high in surrender from the brush now occupied by strip malls and luxury hotels. Not knowing the war was over, they had held out for as long as they could.

Robin's American grandfather, John Wilson, has been holding out the longest of all, from the crop of CIA agents and other personnel sent to the island in 1959 at the high fever of the Cold War.

He was accompanied by his wife, Helen (who, like her husband, also hailed from Pennsylvania) and his four children, including Robin's mother, Suzanne, who, at the age of 1, was the youngest of the quartet of Wilson kids to take up the new tropical address.

"He stayed while most of the other CIA people went back home," Robin said of her grandfather who signed on as a Saipan government employee after his hitch with the agency ended. "He's the only one of the original CIA people still left. He's actually pretty well-known on the island because of it. He's 82 years old. He doesn't talk about what he did in the Agency. But he loves Saipan, that's for sure."

John and Helen (who died in 1974 in hospital on Guam after a lengthy illness), decided early on they would make their life in Saipan. Their children did, too, and Suzanne would grow up and marry Vicente Lizama, a full-blooded Chamorro, a Saipan native, giving Robin an interesting blended-heritage.

Suzanne and Vicente, and husband, Gus, will make the trip to West Virginia for graduation, along with a couple of aunts and uncles from Pennsylvania. That will make the experience even better, Robin said.

"Well, my family is very important to

See SAIPAN on Page 21

KAMBARA

Nine to vie for trophy in 21st AG’s Cup

Nine students representing different high schools on Saipan will be competing tomorrow in the 21st Annual Attorney General’s Cup, a speech competition that this year will focus on the “stateless children” issue.

The contest, sponsored by the Office of the Attorney General, will be held at 9am at the CNMI Supreme Court, located in the CNMI House of Justice, Guma Hustisia, Imwaal Aweewe,. The general public and the media are invited.

This year’s competitors are Sarah Blalock, Marianas High School; Laura Bucher, Kagman High School; Carla Calvo, Marianas Baptist Academy; Marjorie Daria, Tinian High School;

Yveth Mafnas, Calvary Christian Academy; Ivan Mereb, Rota High School; Amy Paul, Saipan Southern High School; Jeffrey P. Sanchez, Mount Carmel High School; and Nicole M. Torres, Grace Christian Academy.

The student that places first in the competition will be allowed to display the AG’s Cup at his or her school for about one year following the competition. This AG’s Cup will be a “traveling” or “perpetual” trophy. All past and future student winners will have their names engraved and permanently displayed on the trophy’s base.

Along with the right to display the actual AG’s Cup, an additional 2004 Winner’s trophy will also be awarded. This

2004 AG’s Cup trophy will be retained by the winning school in commemoration of winning the 2004 competition.

General questions about the competition should be addressed to 2004 AG’s Cup Coordinator Ed Buckingham, at 664-2339.

Since the founding of this great nation, countless people from around the world have left their birthplace and homelands as immigrants in pursuit of the American Dream. Under the doctrine of “Americanism,” each immigrant was allowed to settle in this country and become an American citizen. Together, these immigrants made the United States a “melting pot” of diverse ethnic groups and nationalities. Like

the United States, the CNMI has also become a melting pot. Under principles akin to traditional Americanism, the CNMI is “home” to Chamorros, Carolinians, Pacific Islanders, Asians, and people from around the world, including the mainland United States.

In the CNMI, Article II, section 5 (d) of the Constitution provides that “[t]he legislature shall enact no law which increases the class of nonaliens, except as to those persons defined in Covenant 506(c).” There are also laws that give preference to local businesses and laws that prohibit the sale of land to people not of CNMI-descent. Consistent with Localism, these laws seem to favor those who

have established a connection to the Commonwealth either through residency or through their Chamorro or Carolinian ancestry.

House Bill 14-97, the proposed “Stateless Children Act of 2004” legally “declares and grants children of nonresident workers born between Jan. 9, 1978 and Nov. 4, 1986 permanent resident status in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for all intents and purposes.” It also provides that “the immediate relative status of the children born between Jan. 9, 1978 and Nov. 4, 1986 shall be maintained.”

Question #1: Keeping in mind the best interests of the en-

tire Commonwealth as you sincerely believe them to be, what idea, Americanism, Localism, or some other, should drive the determination of the course that the CNMI should take relative to “stateless children?”

and/or

Question #2: As to House Bill # 14-97, specifically, assuming that you had the deciding vote as a congressional member, keeping in mind the best interests of the entire Commonwealth, as you sincerely believe them to be, what idea, Americanism, Localism, or some other, would determine your position on House Bill 14-97? And why?

SAIPAN
From Page 20

me,” she said. “They’ve supported me on this from day one.”

This trip to the U.S. won’t be the first for Robin, or her family.

They’ve been here a handful of times, visiting those above-mentioned aunts and uncles, and other relatives in her home state of her grandparents. And Robin’s job from time to time takes her to conferences in Washington, D.C., California and Hawaii.

“This will be the first time in West Virginia,” she said. “I want to walk around WVU. I can’t wait to meet my classmates and Dr. Ludlow.”

Meet the (WVU) family

That would be Barbara Ludlow, a professor of educational theory and practice who has served as Robin’s advisor for the three years it has taken her to complete the program.

Ludlow, naturally, was impressed with Robin right from the start.

The work ethic from a far dot

on the globe told the tale. Even with the time difference, Robin, more often than not, would “go live” in class, contributing to discussions by way of her cell phone, or by computer – which was set up with voice communication capabilities from Morgantown to Saipan.

“She didn’t have to do that, but she did,” the professor said. “And it was always exciting for us. Our students from West Virginia and other states could hear the cultural perspectives from a fellow student on the other side of the world. She’s a wonderful student and a dedicated professional and it was an honor to help her achieve her goal. It’s going to be great to finally meet her in person.”

“It’ll be like meeting a movie star,” Robin laughed. “I just know her from my computer screen.”

So what will Robin say next month when she regards her advisor face-to-face for the first time?

“I’ll say ‘hafa adai’ (a traditional Saipan greeting), and I’ll give her a big hug,” Robin said. “WVU has given me a wonderful opportunity.” *(West Virginia University)*

cuc meeting

public notice

MELL
+ RED/BLUE



Love said to test positive for cocaine

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The prosecutor in the misdemeanor drug case against Courtney Love said Monday she tested positive for cocaine when she was arrested last year.

After a judge continued the trial to May 25, Assistant City Attorney Jerry Baik told reporters outside the courtroom that Love tested positive for several illegal drugs after the October arrest, including cocaine. He declined to identify the other drugs.

Love, the widow of grunge rocker Kurt Cobain and former lead singer of the rock band Hole, recently released a solo album, "America's Sweetheart."

Love did not appear at the Monday court hearing, one of two cases stemming from Oct. 2 incidents.

She faces misdemeanor charges of being under the influence of a controlled substance and disorderly conduct after being arrested for allegedly trying to break into the Los Angeles home of a former boyfriend.

After her release, emergency workers were called to her home and took her to a hospital for a drug overdose. Police have testified she handed one officer a plastic bag of pills, which were later identified as oxycodone and hydrocodone—painkillers for which her attorney claims she had prescriptions.

Love was charged with two felony counts of possession of controlled substances. She faces more than three years in prison if convicted.

The felony and misdemeanor cases are being tried separately.



Courtney Love arrives at the Los Angeles County Superior Courthouse in Beverly Hills, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2004, for a preliminary hearing on two felony drug possession charges.

AP



AP

Phylicia Rashad holds flowers and beams during the opening night curtain call for the Broadway revival of "A Raisin in the Sun," Monday, April 26, 2004, in New York.

Survey names Claire Huxtable best TV mom

NEW YORK (AP)—Rudy and Theo would be proud: Claire Huxtable, matriarch of "The Cosby Show" clan, was named best TV mom in a new poll released just in time for Mother's Day.

Played by Phylicia Rashad, Claire Huxtable was the witty, tough mother of five who also worked as a lawyer. Rashad played alongside Bill Cosby's Cliff Huxtable for 8 years, until the NBC sitcom ended in 1992.

The 55-year-old actress, who's starring in the Broadway production of "A Raisin in the Sun" with Sean Combs, also was named "TV mom closest to your own mom in spirit."

Opinion Research Corporation conducted the "Sweet on Mom" survey—financed by the makers of Splenda artificial sweetener—from April 8-11.

Results were based on 720 adults who have a living mother or mother-in-law. The margin of error was plus or minus four points.

Mrs. Cunningham of "Happy Days," played by Marion Ross, was second, followed by Marge Simpson of "The Simpsons," who's voiced by Julie Kavner.

Priestley announces engagement to Lowde

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Former "Beverly Hills, 90210" star Jason Priestley has gotten engaged to longtime girlfriend Naomi Lowde, the actor-director's publicist said Monday.

No other details of the engagement were immediately available, according to spokes-

woman Annett Wolf. Lowde is a makeup artist.

The 34-year-old actor, who played Brandon Walsh on the long-running teen drama, was seriously injured in an August 2002 car crash. The avid race car driver spun out of control at 180 mph and hit a wall nearly

head-on during practice at the Kentucky Speedway.

More recently, Priestley appeared in the campy independent film "Die Mommie Die!" He also directed the 1999 documentary "Barenaked in America," about his fellow Canadians, the band Barenaked Ladies.

Texas police drop charges against Patric



AP

Actor Jason Patric arrives for a screening of "The Alamo" at the Majestic Theater in downtown San Antonio, on March 27, 2004.

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Both charges against actor Jason Patric have been dropped following his arrest in March.

Travis County Attorney David Escamilla said his office decided not to pursue the resisting arrest charge after reviewing evidence and determining that Patric's actions didn't constitute resisting arrest under Texas law.

"Merely retracting your arm or some other similar uncooperative action won't suffice to support a conviction," Escamilla told the Austin American-Statesman over the weekend.

The city attorney's office also dropped a public intoxication charge against Patric last week from the same arrest, so no charges are pending any longer against the actor.

"Mr. Patric is extremely pleased and feels vindicated. He is now consulting with legal counsel to consider his next step regarding his arrest, imprisonment and treatment at the hands of the Austin Police Department," Patric's publicist Michelle Bega said Monday.

"I am really looking forward to going back to Austin and taking care of business," the 37-year-old actor said in a statement that Bega released.

Patric stars as Texas hero James Bowie in "The Alamo." His other films include "The Lost Boys," "Sleepers" and "Speed 2: Cruise Control."

'10.5' draws 20.4 million viewers for NBC

NEW YORK (AP)—Maybe there's a secret desire among television viewers to see California crumble in an earthquake.

The first part of the NBC miniseries, "10.5," was seen by 20.4 million viewers on Sunday night, the most popular movie on NBC in five years, according to Nielsen Media Research.

It was the most-watched movie on any network in more than two years, since CBS' documentary about a real disaster, "9-11."

The NBC tale, to conclude Monday night, starred Kim Delaney and Beau Bridges in a mythical look at California's fate during an epochal earthquake.

The movie did particularly well among the affected area's neighbors. The top-rated cities for "10.5" were Seattle, Wash.; Las Vegas and Portland, Ore., according to Nielsen Media Research.

The last NBC movie to do as well in the ratings was the second part of "Noah's Ark" in May 1999.

Promise without proposal is last straw for hopeful bride

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I am a 39-year-old mother of four and have lived with "Arnold" for 18 years. Arnie has always promised he'd marry me "someday," and I believed him—until last Valentine's Day.

Before Valentine's Day, I had been dropping hints about how romantic it would be if he proposed on that day. We found a sitter and he took me to a fancy restaurant for dinner. I was thrilled, because it was the first time we'd been out alone in a long time.

My heart was pounding all through dinner because I thought this would be the night. Arnie kept repeating how much he loved me—something he has a hard time saying. But that's as far as it went! When we were walking to the car, I finally said, "You're not going to pop the question, are you?" He then removed a tiny ring from his pocket and said, "This is a promise ring. I promise to marry you—someday."

I was devastated. It was as though we were teenagers and he was asking me to go steady. Arnie went on to add that he "wasn't ready" for marriage yet. Well, I don't think he'll EVER be ready!

Am I wrong to expect this man to make a legal commitment? For heaven's sake, we have four children together! We have been a couple for almost two decades. Brides are supposed to be young and pretty. I'm turning old and gray with every day that passes. Should I continue to hang onto the hope that Arnie will keep his "promise"—or is it time to leave?

MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN IN CANADA

DEAR MOTHER: You have been patient long enough. Arnold's promise was an empty one and an insult. If marriage is what you want, please don't wait until your grandchildren or great-grandchildren are old enough to be your flower girls and ring bearers. I recommend consulting an attorney to find out what your common-law rights are. You've put your money on the wrong horse.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 16-year-old girl. My grandparents have raised me because my mom is a drug addict who couldn't take care of herself, much less me. Dad was an alcoholic and took drugs, too.

The police caught Mom with drugs several times and put her in jail. Her parole officer made her go to rehab, but it didn't work very well. She needed a place to stay when she got out, so my grandparents let her stay here for a while. They kicked her out when she came home high.

Mom works at a strip club now. It embarrasses me to have a mother who's a stripper, and we argue a lot when she comes by. She tells me my grandparents are to blame for what she does because they didn't let her live with them.

I hate the fights. But I hate even more the fear that someone may recognize her and think I'm like her. I'm not.

Should I ask my grandparents to move a long way away, so I won't have to worry? Or should I ask to be put in a foster home in another state, or what?

ASHAMED IN OHIO

DEAR ASHAMED: None of the above. You are your own person, and you have done nothing for which you should be ashamed. Concentrate on your grades and extracurricular activities where your talents can shine. And if anyone mentions your mother, hold your head up and tell the person her problems are her own and you're living your own life. It's true.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-228-5955! \$49 per minute. Watch today's puzzle, 11:30 a.m. only. A King Features service. NYT.

I want to go shopping!

MAKE-A-WISH

With an original 8" shopping list, children can go shopping for the things they want most. Call 1-800-848-8888 for more information. Make-A-Wish Foundation, Inc. 11000 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1000, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. www.makeawish.com

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Ziggy®

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY

Justin Jeffre, Sean Astin, Lesley Boone, Sally Jessy Raphael

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Having a crusader attitude will make all the difference in the world this year. Be a little stubborn if you think you are right. Be diverse in all that you do and you will meet the demands being put on you and accomplish your goals. Your numbers are 2, 13, 17, 29, 31, 40

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



COPYRIGHT 2004 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Push to make others aware of what you are doing and how you believe it will help everyone on some level. If you can sell your ideas to others, you will put yourself in a favorable position. □□□



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

This is a perfect day to make some much-needed adjustments. Opportunities will manifest themselves in the most unusual places, so don't hesitate to talk about your dreams. □□□



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Keeping a secret will be of utmost importance today. By disclosing what you are up to, you could blow a deal or your cover. Work by yourself; question your motives. □□□



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Do something creative today that can be used to benefit others. The more you do to help make reforms, the better. □□□□



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You will be misled if you are too gregarious. Tone down and observe what others are doing. Advancement may be at stake. □□



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You can find an ideal romantic partner if you get out and do things that interest you. Get involved in talks that will stimulate your mind and broaden your perspective about projects you want to pursue. □□□□□



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Prepare yourself well so that you can follow through with what's necessary as quickly as possible. Don't be lazy or waste time thinking about what you should be doing. □□□



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Partnerships will be a little hard to handle if you don't take precautions and fully prepare. You can get on with your plans and get the praise you deserve. □□□



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Your work ethics will pay off, so roll up your shirtsleeves and work alongside others for best results. Your team-player approach will put you in a leadership position. □□□



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You should be developing your ideas today. If you find someone particularly inspiring, spend time discussing your plans together. Love and romance will be on your doorstep. □□□□□



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Take the initiative to follow what you feel is the best path and refrain from being led astray. Prepare to take a pass on what others are asking of you. □□

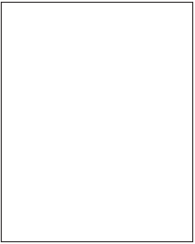


PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Your involvement in good causes will be rewarded today. You will begin to see the results of a job well done. Someone unusual, but interesting, will want to get to know you better. □□□□

BIRTHDAY BABY: You are proactive and never take the conventional route. Your outgoing nature always leads to adventure and excitement. You will chase your dreams until you reach your destiny.

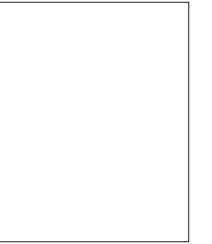
Check out Eugenia's Web sites at astroadvice.com and eugenialast.com.



27

Saipan Tribune Sports

25



32 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2003

SAIPAN TRIBUNE